

CHAPTER 2

The Threat

Section I. General

2-1. Operations.

- a. The guerrilla must be understood before he can be defeated. This chapter discusses the characteristics, tactics, and environment of guerrilla operations.
- b. The guerrilla is the overt combat element of the insurgent organization. The members of the guerrilla force are organized under military concepts to conduct military and paramilitary operations. Their duties usually include all the overt actions that are conducted by the insurgent organization but may include covert and clandestine operations. They are usually most active in insurgent-controlled or contested areas. However, when the insurgency calls for operations in government-controlled areas, the guerrilla may conduct these operations.

2-2. Aims and goals.

- a. **Support overall goal of the insurgent movement.** To this end, the guerrilla operates to support the major goal of the insurgent movement to replace the established government.
- b. **Gain support for insurgent movement.** The guerrilla tries to gain support for the insurgent movement through propaganda, coercion, and terror. If he cannot gain active support, then he will seek passive support: Silence on the part of the populace concerning insurgent activities is considered passive support for the insurgent.
- c. **Increase population's vulnerability.** Through the use of selective terrorism, the guerrilla attacks or destroys economic and political symbols upon which the government is founded. Overreaction on the part of government forces or other elements of authority contributes to the population's dissatisfaction with the government and its subsequent support to the insurgency.
- d. **Lessen government control.** By defeating small government forces and striking where government forces are not, the guerrilla adds to the perception that the government cannot or will not provide security for the population and its property. This adds to the perception that the government cannot control the insurgents.
- e. **Provide psychological victories.** To this end, the guerrilla seeks to gain victories that psychologically benefit the insurgent

movement, whether or not these victories are significant in terms of material damage to the government or its armed forces. It is the psychological advantage the guerrilla seeks.

- f. **Tie up government resources.** By forcing the government to expend resources on military operations against the guerrilla, the guerrilla seeks to tie up resources that could best be utilized by the government in development programs.
- g. **Weaken resolve of government military forces.** By defeating smaller elements of the government's military forces, the guerrilla further weakens the usually limited assets the government has available. He also psychologically weakens the government forces' resolve to continue waging war.

Section II. Environment

2-3. Factors.

The environment that the guerrilla operates in must be examined from more than a geographical point of view. While terrain and climate are important factors, the political, sociological, and economic aspects of the environment take on added importance.

2-4. Terrain.

The rural guerrilla will prefer to continue to live in his own home. He will go to camps if security does not permit him to live at home. He favors level, well-drained campsites with good water supply, natural fuel, cover, and adequate vegetation to provide concealment from aerial observation. The preferred camps are also chosen with a view toward easy access to the target population, access to a friendly or neutral border, good escape routes, and good observation of approach routes used by government counterguerrilla forces. When counterguerrilla operations by government forces force the guerrilla out of his preferred base camps, he tends to establish camps in rugged inhospitable areas not easily penetrated by government forces.

2-5. Climate.

The fact that the guerrilla is usually a native to the area and is used to the climate gives him an added advantage. If the government forces are also familiar with this type of climate, then the advantage to the guerrilla is lessened. If the government forces are not familiar with operating in the climate, then the advantage to the guerrilla increases. Generally, the climate of the area does not favor either the guerrilla or the government forces to any great degree unless there are extremes involved. Then the impact is on the logistical systems.

2-6. Political factors.

The amount of government control in a given area directly impacts on the ability of the guerrilla to operate. The more government control, the less successful are guerrilla activities, whereas less government control of an area improves chances for guerrilla success. The guerrilla will attempt to disrupt normal government functions and destroy key government facilities and personnel to reduce the level of government control in an area.

2-7. Sociological factors.

The more fragmented a society is, the greater the opportunity for dissatisfaction among the populace. The guerrilla will attempt to increase friction between different groups in society. These groups may be aligned along racial, ethnic, religious, or social lines. Language differences or tradition may also be a reason for alignment. Religious influences may play a significant role in the sociological factors that affect the guerrilla.

2-8. Economic factors.

Low standards of living and desires for economic reforms may be popular causes of dissatisfaction with the government. As with political and sociological factors, the greater the degree of dissatisfaction with the government's economic policies, the better the guerrilla's chances for success. The guerrilla seeks to exploit this situation through the use of psychological operations. Since the guerrilla derives a major portion of his logistical support from the local economy, he will normally not disrupt it drastically. Guerrilla forces will destroy a local economy of an area as a lesson to the people living there to exact more support or obedience from them.

2-9. Impact.

- a. The impact that each of the factors has on the guerrilla, and his ability to successfully operate, changes in each situation. A careful analysis by the commander and his staff of each of the factors is necessary to determine what the impact of each is prior to conducting counter guerrilla operations. In all cases, each factor must be analyzed to determine the peculiarities, weaknesses, and strengths it may have in relation to the guerrilla.
- b. In planning for counter guerrilla operations, the commander exploits disclosed guerrilla weaknesses and deprives the guerrilla, wherever possible, of any opportunities to exploit government weaknesses.

Section III. Characteristics

2-10. Considerations.

- a. By understanding the general characteristics of the guerrilla, it is easier to determine strengths which must be reduced or avoided and weaknesses which can be exploited.
- b. The characteristics discussed are general, and the commander planning counter guerrilla operations must analyze a particular situation to discover how these considerations apply.

2-11. Guerrilla strengths.

- a. **Intelligence.** The intelligence networks in the infrastructure usually provide continuous and current information on government force dispositions, strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities. The need for secrecy as an element of survival for the insurgent organization makes government penetration and disruption of these intelligence networks difficult. However, their structures are vulnerable to penetration and careful, detailed analysis. Intelligence collecting and analyses must be placed on a robust footing early to build data bases. Pattern analysis and other techniques can rob the guerrilla of this advantage. counter guerrilla forces can also overcome this intelligence advantage through the comprehensive use of deception, operations security, and communications security.
- b. **Indigenous characteristics.**
 - (1) Guerrillas usually have the ability to blend with the local populace. In many cases they are part of the local populace. This enhances their capability to operate with secrecy in a given area.
 - (2) The counter guerrilla force must identify the guerrilla and remove him from the civilian populace. This is best accomplished through the effective use of population and resources control.
 - (3) Care must be taken to ensure that civilians are not injured or mistreated as a result of counter guerrilla operations.
- c. **Knowledge.**
 - (1) The guerrilla's knowledge of the local populace and terrain is a strength. It gives him the ability to utilize psychological operations effectively. The guerrilla can usually develop a working relationship with the populace because they identify to some degree with his cause. If he cannot persuade them, he has the force to coerce them. The counter guerrilla

force must try to overcome this advantage by fostering a strong relationship between the government forces and the populace. The creation of a local civilian defense force by the government and the counterguerrilla force's cooperation with it is one way to do this.

- (2) By knowing the environment he operates in, the guerilla has a major advantage. This advantage may be overcome by continuous counterguerrilla operations in a given area by a permanently stationed counterguerrilla force and skillful use of native assets.
- d. **Motivation and discipline.** The guerrilla leaders are trained and motivated. They reinforce motivation within the guerrilla force through the immediate application of discipline. Usually, the guerrilla is devoted to a cause almost to the point of fanaticism.
- e. **Limited responsibilities.** The guerrilla usually does not have the responsibility to maintain normal governmental obligations toward society. This frees all his efforts to conduct operations in support of the insurgency goals. However, the guerrilla force may be tasked to perform certain political services (such as tax collection) by the insurgency shadow government.
- f. **Tactics.** The guerrilla can utilize a broad range of tactics, from terror and sabotage through conventional warfare. This enables him to escalate or deescalate antigovernment activity almost at will.
- g. **Physical condition.**
 - (1) Guerrillas are usually of an age which places them in their years of greatest physical stamina. One of the major advantages the guerrilla has is his ability to endure hardship. Usually, because of the situation, he has to make do with less. This forces him to adapt and be innovative.
 - (2) The general strengths described are designed to provide a base to analyze the specific guerrilla threat. No two guerrilla forces are identical. These strengths are applied against the specific situation being addressed. Whatever the results of that analysis, the obvious strengths must be reduced or circumvented.

2-12. Guerrilla weaknesses.

- a. **Limited personnel and resources.** The guerrilla normally lacks the personnel and the logistics to intentionally become decisively engaged with government forces. Difficulty in recruitment and resupply to replace his combat losses in

personnel and materiel may limit his operations. The counter-guerrilla force should exploit these weaknesses by interdicting supply routes and facilities, forcing desertion because of hardships; and by inflicting combat losses that are hard to replace.

- b. **Individual factors.** Basically, the guerrilla endures a life of physical danger and privation. These stresses can be exploited by counter-guerrilla forces. Numerically inferior to the government forces facing him, fear of being treated as a criminal if captured by the government, and fear of violence to himself and his family (imposed by the guerrilla organization to ensure his cooperation) are stress factors in addition to constant combat and a hostile environment that weaken guerrilla resolve. In some societies, good treatment, pardon, protection, food, shelter, and participation in the government may be stronger incentives than the fear of criminal punishment to induce guerrilla desertions.
- c. **Operational factors.** Operational weaknesses may include security, which requires extensive resources and slows down responsiveness; bases that are difficult to acquire and operate; and the lack of technology or ability to maintain captured high-technology items. The dependence of the guerrilla on popular support is also a weakness, since if that support wavers or is withdrawn, then the guerrilla will not be able to operate effectively. Another operational weakness may be the lack of sophisticated communications, which could require the guerrilla to spend an excessive amount of time preparing to launch an operation.

2-13. Guerrilla support.

A major concern common to all guerrillas is support. Support can be divided into two general categories.

- a. **Popular support.**
 - (1) As discussed previously, the guerrilla must have either the active or passive support of the populace to succeed. Popular support alone will not ensure the success of guerrilla operations. Ineffective operations, unwise decisions, and poor leadership are examples of deficiencies that would preclude his success. Popular support should be viewed, instead, as a condition that must exist for the guerrilla to initiate and conduct operations in a given area over a period of time. If popular support does not exist or is withdrawn, the guerrilla will not be able to conduct operations with any hope of success. Therefore, one of the prime considerations for the counter-guerrilla force is to gain and maintain the support of the populace. Areas where active support is given to the

guerrilla are excellent targets for psychological operations. Populace and resources control operations will play a vital role in winning support away from the guerrilla.

- (2) In areas where only passive support is given to the guerrilla, then government efforts through psychological operations and civil affairs, as well as the provision of security, must be initiated to gain active support and trust of the government. In areas that the government controls and where the populace supports the government, increased emphasis is placed on all six major operations in IDAD to maintain that support.

b. Logistical support.

- (1) This is one of the guerrilla's most vulnerable areas. In early operations, the guerrilla relies on his base of popular support for logistical requirements. As the guerrilla force develops and expands, its logistical needs may increase to the point that the internal support base can no longer provide for all of the guerrilla's logistical requirements. If the insurgent movement has not reached the point where the attainment of its overall goals is imminent, then the guerrilla may have to receive additional logistical support from another source.
- (2) If the guerrilla receives support from external sources, then he is faced with the problem of security for supply lines, transport means, and storage facilities. External support should not be considered a prerequisite for the initiation of counter guerrilla operations. It is an additional factor that, if present and effective, will enhance the capabilities of the guerrilla. In any case, the counter guerrilla force should seek to interdict the logistic support that the guerrilla is receiving, whether it be internal or external.
- (3) Since the guerrilla operates along military lines, he will usually have temporary sites for headquarters, installations, facilities, and operational units. These temporary sites are called guerrilla base camps. It is in these camps that the guerrilla has his command posts, training areas, communications facilities, medical stations, and logistics centers. The guerrilla may also use these camps for rest, retraining, and reequipping.
- (4) It must be understood that these camps do not equate with conventional force operational bases since the guerrilla does not seek to defend them if they are discovered. They are temporary and depend on secrecy for their existence. If discovered, the guerrilla will usually abandon the site and move his operation. These bases are kept small, and usually

there is more than one base in the guerrilla's area of operation.

- (5) Characteristics of a base camp area are:
 - (a) **Cover and concealment.** The guerrilla will attempt to locate base camps in areas where cover and concealment provide security against detection.
 - (b) **Rough, inaccessible terrain.** Usually, the rougher the terrain, the less likely is the chance of being surprised by government forces. Terrain is chosen to provide security against detection. Key terrain, as seen by the conventional force, is usually avoided. While guerrillas avoid defensive combat, they emphasize short-term defensive action in the base camp vicinity to aid evacuation, if necessary.
 - (c) **Suitable for bivouac.** The area selected is a suitable bivouac area. Consideration is given to food and water supply, grade or slope of terrain, access to trails, and protective environment.
 - (d) **Remoteness.** Base camps are usually in relatively remote areas for security. To preclude accidental discovery, base camps are not usually near inhabited areas. However, because the guerrilla must be able to fill his logistical needs, his base camp usually will not be more than one day's march from a village or town. If the counterguerrilla force can locate and disrupt these camps, then the guerrilla can be kept off balance and on the run, allowing the counterguerrilla force to gain the initiative.

Section IV. Tactics

2-14. Terrorism and harassment.

- a. When guerrilla forces first become operational, they usually engage in limited or small-scale activities and operations. If they reach more sophisticated levels of organization, equipment, and training, then larger operations utilizing more conventional tactics may be expected.
- b. Guerrilla tactics are characterized by elusiveness, surprise, and brief, violent action. These tactics in the early phases can be divided into terrorism and harassment.
 - (1) **Terrorism.** The guerrilla may use terrorism if it fits a given situation and accomplishes his goals. Terrorist techniques include bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, threats,

mutilation, murder, torture, and blackmail. It must be recognized that all guerrillas do not use terrorism as a tool. If terrorism is utilized, it is usually for coercion, provocation, or intimidation.

- (a) **Coercion.** This is used to persuade individuals to act favorably in given situations toward the guerrilla or the insurgent movement. As an example, terrorism might be used to persuade a local mayor to revise policy concerning the guerrilla.
- (b) **Provocation.** This is used to provoke an overreaction on the part of government forces so that the population will be alienated by government forces' actions. Targets are usually government soldiers, leaders, or policemen.
- (c) **Intimidation.** This is used to modify behavior. Usually, threats or fear of harm, either to the individual or his family and friends, are used. Intimidation can be used to induce the populace to silence or noncooperation with government forces. It is used to discourage competent citizens from accepting critical low-level governmental positions.

(2) **Harassment.**

- (a) Most guerrilla operations are offensive, not defensive. There is seldom an attempt to seize and defend objectives for any length of time.
- (b) The guerrilla uses dispersion during his movements, but near the target area, small guerrilla elements mass and then conduct operations.
- (c) While the guerrilla is outnumbered by government forces, he seeks to attain local numerical superiority. In this way he can attain victory over small elements of the government forces. These tactics, if successful, compel government forces to commit larger elements to defensive tasks. Once government forces move to the defensive, they lose the initiative and become reactive. This allows the guerrilla time and space to develop to a point where he has the capability to engage larger government forces with more conventional tactics.
- (d) The most common techniques employed by the guerrilla are the ambush, raid, and small-scale attacks. These techniques are usually targeted against security posts, small forces, facilities, and lines of communication.

- (e) Harassing tactics are utilized to keep government forces on the defensive. If successful, they make government forces react to guerrilla operations, taking away the government's ability to conduct offensive operations that would prevent successful guerrilla operations.
- (f) Harassing tactics are also effective in weakening the government's resources and disrupting lines of communication. One advantage of harassment is the perceived image it gives of the guerrilla being able to strike anywhere at will. It also makes the government appear ineffective and incompetent by continuously losing small battles.

2-15. Mao's principles.

The principles of guerrilla tactics have been stated by China's Mao Tse-Tung:

- Enemy advances, we retreat.
- Enemy halts, we harass.
- Enemy tires, we attack.
- Enemy retreats, we pursue.